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# HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE  
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SUBJECT: "Cooking With Electricity"-- Information from Rural Electrification Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture

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Some homemakers say it's cheap to cook with electricity...others say it's expensive...and the argument is on. Actually...as in many other matters...it all depends. In this case...it depends on how well you know the tricks of electric cookery.

An REA-financed cooperative in Ohio has just completed a metered test of electric cooking costs on the electric range used by one of its members. Current used by the range was measured separately from other current used on the farm.

And the test showed that over a period of 7 years...the range used an average of 116 kilowatt hours a month. That was for all cooking. At the electric rates paid by this Ohio farm family...the cost averaged less than three dollars a half a month...or about one cent a person a meal.

This Ohio homemaker uses her range for all cooking operations...from heating water for dishwashing and canning...to cooking in the oven and deep well compartment. She uses a pressure cooker for her canning. One month in late summer she put up 300 jars of food and fruit juices.

One advantage in cooking by electricity---says this Ohio homemaker---is that heat from an electric range is quick and lasting. She turns her switch "high" for quick heat...then turns it "low" to finish cooking. She reports the "low" setting will usually keep food boiling.

Here are some pointers from rural electrification specialists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture on cooking with electricity.

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When you cook on an electric range...be sure you're using pans wide enough to cover the hot part of the unit...a small pan on a large unit wastes electricity.

Something else. Use kettles and pans with flat bottoms and close fitting lids. And once the food is cooking...avoid lifting the lid and stirring any more than necessary. Because this allows steam needed to cook the food to escape. And exposure to air destroys vitamins.

When you use the oven...fill it to capacity if possible. It takes a little more electricity to cook several foods in the oven than it does to cook one. So when you plan oven meals...select foods that require about the same temperature and cooking time...and bake them all at the same time.

Such steps as these will enable any homemaker to cook with electricity...and to cook cheaply.

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